

The gentleman and many from the Florida delegation came to the floor expressing their concern for social services that were being overrun by Haitian refugees. 60,000 in 3 years. And every day we saw members of the Florida delegation complaining about the pressures on their State that somehow we had to end this massive immigration, people risking their lives in bath-tubs virtually, to come to the United States, it was so bad in Haiti.

In the last 3 years, we have had 3,000 refugees coming in from Haiti. Is that a failed policy? Do we want to go back to the kind of policy we had before? In the last several months here, we have pulled out the peacekeeping forces at the insistence of the chairman of the Committee on International Relations. We are not training their police. They have no trained police.

And now these people who are helping the poorest people in our hemisphere, some of the poorest people on the planet, we are going to pull them out too? Why? We are not getting enough refugees coming across the ocean? They are not taking their little boats and risking their lives and their families to come to Florida? Is that what the gentleman wants?

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GEJDENSON. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman is addressing me as "the gentleman from Florida," is the gentleman asking, do we want to keep the troops in Haiti to stop Haitians from leaving the oppression in Haiti? Is that what this is about?

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, it seems to me that if we squander this opportunity where we are in the developmental process of a democracy, maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but I will guarantee my colleague, dictatorship will return and those refugees will be coming again.

It is better for the Haitians, it is better for the U.S. if we are able to help these people have a decent living at home. The violence has been reduced. The Toutons Macoute is almost out of business. There are not 60,000 refugees coming here to the United States in a 3-year period. Let us continue the good work we have started.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire of the Chairman how much time is remaining on either side?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) controls 6½ minutes. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) controls 7 minutes.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, our military did a superb job when they were sent to Haiti back in 1994. However, their mission of restoring the elected civilian government of former president Jean Bertrand Aristide was accomplished some time ago. I imagine that many Americans are not aware that we still have troops in Haiti.

The Clinton administration informs Congress that we have maintained our permanent troop presence in Haiti to provide humanitarian relief and to give our Army Corps of Engineers and medical personnel opportunities to be trained. However, I do not believe it is now necessary to keep a permanent troop presence in Haiti to accomplish those goals.

Obviously, humanitarian relief activities can be conducted at far less expense to our taxpayers by civilian contractors working for our Agency for International Development.

It is obvious that Haiti is becoming a dangerous place. Our local commander in Haiti has had to raise his assessment of the threats against our troops from both common crime and, increasingly, political unrest.

In an ominous development, on June 4, press reports revealed that civilian employees of the U.S. military support group in Haiti abandoned their all-terrain vehicle in a hail of rocks. Protesters then torched the vehicle.

Our troops are increasingly unable to conduct their stated humanitarian mission. They are hunkered down and there are clear signs that they may become direct targets of attack. The presence of the troops has certainly not stopped nor in any way deterred numerous political murders or recent rioting.

Despite the administration's insistence that U.S. troops do not have a security role, we can see U.S. troops mired in a dangerous, open-ended commitment in Haiti.

The chairman of our Committee on Intelligence, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), and I offered this amendment in an effort to support the Defense Department's sensible recommendations that the permanent U.S. military presence in Haiti under Operation Uphold Democracy should be brought to an end.

Normal stationing of U.S. troops to protect our embassy and to provide diplomatic representation in Haiti would, of course, be permitted at all times. The President's authority to protect American lives and property in Haiti are also explicitly protected by this amendment.

The intent of this amendment is to make certain that our U.S. troops permanently deployed in Haiti under Operation Uphold Democracy through the U.S. support group will be completely withdrawn by December 31, 1999. The administration has fully 7 months to complete an orderly drawdown of our

troops who are permanently stationed in Haiti.

Until such time as they are completely removed, our troops will continue to conduct their currently scheduled humanitarian missions.

After the permanently deployed troops are completely withdrawn, U.S. forces will be permitted to deploy to Haiti for short-term expeditionary missions.

There are serious concerns about the security of our troops in Haiti which we should consider. Moreover, it is not fair to our men and women in uniform to leave them in Haiti in an open-ended deployment.

Accordingly, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1401 and urge our colleagues to support the Gilman-Goss amendment.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I was privileged to join the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. CHARLES RANGEL), and we went to Haiti quite recently. We met with Pierre Denize, the national police chief of Haiti.

Remember, Haiti does not have an army now because we have agreed and they have agreed to get rid of them. We met with Bob Manuel, the Secretary of State for Public Security in Haiti. We got what I considered an excellent report about that.

Our troops are not in jeopardy. How many troops are we talking about. I ask my esteemed chairman of the Committee on International Relations? Two hundred seventy; 270 troops. Psychologically, they are performing an immensely important task of working and development. They are not there for security. I found them not to be in jeopardy. They are working with Department of Justice and Department of Defense people in the Isat training program, in the U.N. SITPOL agreement. Things are moving.

If we try to legislate them out of Haiti before the administration, the Department of Defense, and the State Department, which have all agreed that they should go, the question is the timing and whether the House of Representatives should now become the executive branch of Government.

Please, I beg my colleagues not to intrude this amendment, which is potentially dangerous, into the subject matter of Haiti. Haiti has problems. It is coming along very well.

I am glad that I was invited by my esteemed colleagues from New York and Florida to witness and talk in depth with them about this subject. Those troops are important there. They are not in jeopardy. And let us not pull them out prematurely.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) has 4½ minutes remaining. The gentleman